

APPENDIX C

What to Do if a Cop Pulls You Over

In Chapter 1, you read about Emiliano Gomez who was pulled over while driving a rented Ford Taurus with a cooler in the back seat. Gomez, frightened by the police, knowing that he had \$124,700 in the cooler, limited in the language and unfamiliar with his rights, made a series of mistakes. Now let's imagine that *you* are the driver, and that for some reason you are carrying a large amount of cash. However, since it is extremely well hidden, you should have no reason to be unduly nervous.

Stop reading. Go out and check out your car!

Now is the time to do this, not when you are just leaving on a trip. Remove any bumper stickers, political stickers, or “cute” signs around the license plate. No baseball caps should be showing in the rear window, especially if they show the name of your favorite team. Remove any window decals for musical groups of any kind.

Take a walk around your car to make sure it has a clean well-maintained look. This means no cracked windows, no missing hub caps, and no crumpled fenders. Are the tags up to date? Is the inspection sticker current (if required in your state)? Check all the lights to be absolutely positively sure that no bulbs are burned out. If the tires are showing wear, replace them. If your muffler is failing, get a new one.

On the road, as long as you fasten your seat belt and strictly obey the traffic laws, you may never be pulled over, but don't count on it. During a recent trip heading east on I-90, I was following a black Jeep Cherokee. The driver was just under the speed limit and so was I. Suddenly a patrol car came up behind me, lights flashing. I prepared to pull over but he passed me and flagged down the Jeep ahead.